

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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TAGS: OVIP, IS (MONDALE, WALTER F.)
SUBJECT: ISRAELI PRESS EDITORIAL RESPONSE TO WALL VISIT CONTROVERSY

REF: TEL AVIV 8180

1. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY TRANSLATIONS OF EDITORIALS IN
HEBREW PRESS JUNE 29 ON VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S VISIT TO
THE WESTERN WALL:

2. "THE MONDALE VISIT (DAVAR): THE VERY DEFINITION OF A
PROBLEM IS PROBLEMATIC. THE "MINI CRISIS" OVER THE US VICE
PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO JERUSALEM IS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE. HAD
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THE PROFESSIONAL MONDALE ADVISERS NOT TAKEN THE SHADOWS OF
MOUNTAINS FOR REAL MOUNTAINS, THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO
THE WESTERN WALL ESCORTED BY THE JERUSALEM MAYOR WOULD HAVE
HAD NO POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. IF THE DISTINGUISHED VISITOR
INTENDS TO VISIT THE WALL--HIS OWN IDEA--WHAT CAN BE
MORE NATURAL THAN TO DO SO IN THE COMPANY OF TEDDY KOLLEK?
HE HAS, AFTER ALL, ESCORTED WALTER MONDALE BEFORE, AND

BOTH WERE OFFICIAL FIGURES AT THE TIME. THE MAYOR OF JERUSALEM WAS, FURTHERMORE, ELECTED BY INHABITANTS OF BOTH PARTS OF THE CITY, AND THE US VICE PRESIDENT IS MOST CERTAINLY FREE TO DO WHAT THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT IS ENTITLED TO. ALL THESE REASONS CONSIDERED, THE FACT THAT THE JERUSALEM MAYOR WILL BE ESCORTING MONDALE COULD BE A MATTER OF COURSE, IF NOT FOR THE ARTIFICIALLY INTRODUCED POLITICAL ELEMENT RESULTING FROM HASTY ADVISE. TEDDY KOLLEK, WHO IS RIGHTLY DEDICATED TO THE DEFENSE OF JERUSALEM'S HONOR, COULD NOT HAVE REACTED OTHERWISE, AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE HAD TO GIVE HIM ITS BACKING. AFTER A FEW HOURS OF DEJECTION, A SOLUTION SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN FOUND. THE MONDALE VISIT TO THE WALL WILL BE PRIVATE, AND IN RESPONSE TO HIS INVITATION, WITH TEDDY KOLLEK AS AN ESCORT. THAT SEEMS TO BE AN EMERGENCY SOLUTION, BUT WE FIND IT ACCEPTABLE. NEITHER PARTY SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN CREATING ANOTHER PROBLEM OF THE NOT SO ELEGANT DEFINITIONS, WHEN THE FACTS ARE SATISFACTORY. AFTER ALL, THE MAIN OBJECT OF THE MONDALE VISIT IS TO DEMONSTRATE THE GOODWILL OF THE GREATEST OF DEMOCRACIES TOWARD THE ONLY DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IT WOULD BE POINTLESS TO THWART IT.

3. "A BITTER TASTE" (YEDIOT): THE MAYOR OF JERUSALEM MR. TEDDY KOLLEK, IS TO BE CONGRATULATED FOR HAVING SAID ALOUD WHAT MANY OF US ARE THINKING, NAMELY THAT IF THE US VICE PRESIDENT, MR. WALTER MONDALE, IS COMING TO UNCLASSIFIED

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ISRAEL IN ORDER TO HUMILIATE US IN JERUSALEM IN DEMONSTRATION OF HIS OPPOSITION TO THE UNIFICATION OF THE CITY UNDER OUR RULE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BEST HAD HE NOT COME AT ALL. EVEN IF MONDALE PAYS A "PRIVATE VISIT" TO THE WESTERN WALL, OUR REQUESTS WHICH HAD PROMPTED HIM TO DO SO HAVE LEFT A BITTER TASTE IN OUR MOUTHS.

4. "THE WESTERN WALL COMPROMISE--FAIR YET LAME" (MAARIV): "THE WESTERN WALL COMPROMISE" REACHED WITH THE US VICE PRESIDENT IS, LIKE MOST COMPROMISES IN THE WORLD OF OURS, BOTH FAIR AND LAME. LIKE MOST COMPROMISES, IT SATISFIES AND DISAPPOINTS EACH PARTY EQUALLY. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT COULD NOT HAVE CONCEIVABLY BEEN EXPECTED TO AGREE THAT THE US VICE PRESIDENT WOULD DEMONSTRATIVELY OMIT THE EASTERN PART OF THE ISRAELI CAPITAL FROM A VISIT INTENDED TO INCLUDE THE US IN THE CELEBRATION OF ISRAEL'S THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY. MAYOR KOLLEK MAY WELL HAVE BEEN THE SPEARHEAD IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE HONOR OF JERUSALEM, AND HE DESERVES THE WARM PRAISES OF ALL ISRAELIS, BUT THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE MADE IT AMPLY CLEAR TO THE US AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL THAT THEY WOULD UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES BE ABLE TO TOLERATE SUCH AN AFFRONT TO JERUSALEM. THE JERUSALEM INCI-

DENT IS SEVEN TIMES AS DISCONCERTING BECAUSE IT INVOLVES A US STATESMAN WHO HAS ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS STAUNCH PRO-ISRAELI LEANINGS AND HIS SUPPORT IN HARD TIMES. IN SPITE OF THE LAST-MINUTE COMPROMISE, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE ACTUAL DIFFERENCES WILL SOMEWHAT OVERCLOUD THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE VISIT, WHOSE AIM WAS TO DEMONSTRATE AND ACCENTUATE THE TRADITIONALLY FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE CONFIRMED ARMS DEAL WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT. INSTEAD, THE VISIT HAS, AT THIS POINT AT LEAST, EXPOSED CONTROVERSIAL PROBLEMS DIVIDING THE TWO COUNTRIES. IF WE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT THE FINAL CELEBRATIONS OF ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE TO BE ATTENDED BY THE AMERICANS ARE TO TAKE PLACE IN ALEXANDRIA, WHERE MONDALE WILL BE VISITING PRESI-
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DENT SADAT, WE MAY UNDERSTAND THOSE WHO ARE ADVISING US NOT TO GO OVERBOARD IN OUR VARIOUS RECEPTIONS FOR THE HIGH-RANKING VISITOR. IT MIGHT BE ADVISABLE TO COMPROMISE HERE TOO, NAMELY BETWEEN EXCESSIVE ENTHUSIASM FOR THE EXPECTED VISIT, AND THE THREATS TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST HIM.
END TEXTS.
LEWIS

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